

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

Date: May 1, 2001

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## **200<sup>th</sup> Birthday for Pio Pico, Last Governor of Mexican California**

### **Thousands to Celebrate Cinco de Mayo at Pio Pico Family Festival In San Gabriel**

SAN GABRIEL – One of the largest celebrations of the Cinco de Mayo weekend in Southern California is now set for Saturday, May 5, 2001, on the streets of the historic City of San Gabriel, the “Birthplace of the Los Angeles Region.” It is estimated that 5,000 to 7,000 people will be drawn to the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Pio Pico, the last Mexican Governor of California. It is an event that is shaping up to be one of the largest living history celebrations ever held in Southern California.

#### **A Cinco de Mayo Celebration**

“Of all the events I have heard of for the commemoration of the Cinco de Mayo weekend,” said State Parks Director Rusty Areias, “this one promises to be one of the best-ever at showcasing the 200 years of California’s rich and diverse history. The living history portrayals and displays will make the pages of our history books jump to life along the streets of the city of San Gabriel. If there is a celebration of Cinco de Mayo that people should not miss, it is this one,” said Areias. State Parks Director Areias will be at the celebration as one of the keynote speakers.

#### **Mexican War Encampments, Roping with Vaqueros and More**

In this one-day celebration, Saturday, May 5, 2001, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., community groups from throughout the San Gabriel Valley will be joining together to celebrate 200 years of California history and to relive the legacy of Pio de Jesus Pico, IV, the last Governor of

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Mexican California. The celebration will include living history displays, living history character actors and actresses, bands and musical groups, living history displays of early cooking, and hands-on children's activities. In addition, there will be Civil War and Mexican War encampments, roping demonstrations by Vaqueros, rides on historic, horse-drawn wagons and stagecoaches, and Buffalo Soldier demonstrations. From the modern world of today, the Los Angeles Kings hockey team will be bringing their Kings Chariot. This is a regulation size, in-line hockey rink mounted on the back of a customized truck and trailer. In addition, there will be an antique car show.

### **Pio Pico, The Last Governor of Mexican California**

Traditionally, the State Department of Parks and Recreation sponsors an annual event commemorating the birth of Pio Pico at the Pio Pico State Historic Park in Whittier, the location of the adobe mansion where Pico lived as the last Governor of Mexican California. However, because the mansion is now undergoing a \$5.4 million dollar restoration, the celebration has been moved to the City of San Gabriel, a fitting location because Pico was born at the San Gabriel Mission Arcangel on May 5, 1801, 200 years ago.

There are several cooperating partners acting as the primary sponsors and organizers of the event:: The California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Raul R. Rodriguez Scholarship Foundation, the City of San Gabriel and the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce. To enhance importance of this bicentennial tribute, the State Parks Department asked the Raul R. Rodriguez Scholarship Foundation to produce a larger, multi-cultural venue. That has been done, making this event one of the premier Cinco de Mayo events of the region.

### **A leader Who Shaped the Future of California**

One of California's most remarkable historical figures, a natural politician, entrepreneur and bon vivant, Pico's turbulent and interesting life encompassed almost an entire century. His ancestry reveals a mixture of ethnic strains, including mulatto, mestizo and Italian. During his long and active life, he rose from poverty to become one of the richest men in California and for a time held the office of Governor of California, the highest political office in Mexican California. Pio Pico witnessed and helped shape nearly a century of California history before his death in Los Angeles on September 11, 1894.

### **Celebrate your Cinco de Mayo in San Gabriel, A Fitting Place for Pio Pico's Birthday**

**Where: City of San Gabriel, Mission District**

**When: Saturday, May 5, 2001, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Cost: Free and everyone is welcome.**

For the past six months, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the City of Whittier, has been working on a comprehensive restoration of the Pio Pico Adobe. The public is invited to visit and see how this important part of California's history is being renovated to look as it did in the late 1800's.

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